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The Nation's Forgotten Responders

Recent Reports on Terrorism Preparedness Fail to Include Skilled Support Personnel

Construction Trade Personnel Are at Risk If Called Upon to Respond to Incidents of Terrorism or the Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction

ASSIGNMENT EDITORS: Demonstration of Responder Coordination/Rescue Efforts, Media Availability & Workshop in Beckley WV July 9, 2003. Complete Agenda attached.

Beckley, WV, July 8, 2003 – Local and national leaders are meeting in Beckley, WV to discuss the current safety and health training requirements and available resources for construction workers and other skilled support personnel who are critical in any major disaster response. A recent series of reports have focused the nation's attention on the needs of the "first responders" but these workers are the nation's "forgotten responders" whose very lives and health are at risk.

The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Worker Education and Training Program awards cooperative agreements to support the development of curricula and training programs throughout the country to help employers meet OSHA requirements under 29 CFR 1910.120, Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response. These Awardees are having a roundtable discussion starting at 9:00am July 9, 2003 on the preparation and protection of site disaster responders at the International Technology and Training Center at 1293 Airport Road, Beaver, WV.

At 10:45am July 9, 2003, there will be a demonstration of responder coordination at a simulated collapsed building site. The Operating Engineers HAZMAT Program will work with local West Virginia firefighters and medical providers to demonstrate a rescue effort after a building collapse, presumably from a terrorist attack. The scenario will demonstrate coordination and communication between the building engineers, responders, and heavy equipment operators needed to move debris.

“It is clear from the September 11th attack that the need for the specific health and safety training must be provided to a much larger audience of chemical emergency responders and hazardous materials workers. Heightened protection and training for all our nation's current hazardous materials shipments and chemical operations must be implemented immediately to protect the nation's infrastructure from other potential terrorist attacks on both fixed and mobile chemical-intensive operations,” said Dr. Kenneth Olden, Director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS).

On September 11, 2001, more than one million tons of steel, insulation, paper products, office equipment, computers, and dust fell in lower Manhattan. The dust from concrete and glass combined with combustion products from the burning of plastics, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), furniture, insulation, and computers creating a cloud that contained a mix of chemicals, particulates, and smoke. The long-term health effects from inhaling these pollutants are currently unknown, as no similar exposure has ever occurred. Additionally, these effects may not be fully known for years to come.

NIEHS commissioned a report, conducted by the National Clearinghouse for Worker Safety Health and Training, which contains recommendation for improving current federal training requirements for skilled support personnel, and examines the feasibility of a national registry of trained workers that could be used by emergency management organizations during future responses. The report, “Improving the Training of Skilled Support Personnel for Responding to Terrorist Actions: A Review of the Problems and Feasible Solutions” was developed as a result of a five-month review involving agency and current NIEHS WETP grant recipients, construction workers, and local and state-level emergency management operations. The lessons learned from the WTC site, the study suggests, necessitates a review of current OSHA training requirements for these workers and argues against their current status under the OSHA standard as merely “temporary workers” at emergency sites. The complete report, and other material, is available at <http://www.wetp.org>.

About the NIEHS WETP - The NIEHS WETP was created in 1987 by Congress as part of the Superfund Program to support the development of a network of non-profit organizations that are committed to protecting workers and their communities by creating and delivering high-quality, peer-reviewed safety and health curricula to target populations of hazardous waste workers and emergency responders. Through NIH grants, the WETP awards cooperative agreements to support the development of curricula and training programs throughout the country to help employers meet OSHA requirements under 29 CFR 1910.120, Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response.

For more information, please visit www.wetp.org

AGENDA

NIEHS Roundtable on the Preparation and Protection of Site Disaster Responders *Wednesday, July 9, 2003*

**8:30-9:00 Welcome and introductions, Donald R. Carson, Director,
International Environmental Technology and Training Center**

**Introduction to the purpose of the meeting, Joseph “Chip” Hughes,
Jr., Director, NIEHS Worker Education and Training Program**

**Introductory remarks, Dr. Kenneth Olden, Director, National
Institute of Environmental Health Sciences**

**9:00-10:10 Overview of the recent activities of the NIEHS grantees to train a
diverse cadre of workers to respond safely to terrorist actions.**

NIEHS grantees were in the forefront of the cleanup of the World Trade Center and Pentagon. This session will provide an update on the activities that grantees have undertaken within the last year to ensure adequate training for workers who respond to terrorist actions. One of the recent NIEHS Small Business Innovative Research awardees will also present his firm’s Homeland Security efforts. The National Clearinghouse will present findings from a recent survey of the TOPOFF2 exercise.

- International Association of Fire Fighters, Scott Solomon
- Laborers AGC, Tom Nunziata
- International Union of Operating Engineers, Don Carson
- Center to Protect Workers Rights, Pete Stafford
- National Puerto Rican Forum/OAI, Sheila Pressley
- Glenn Paulson, UMDNJ
- Bill Borwegen, SEIU
- Pat Berntsen, HMTRI
- Mike Sprinker, ICWUC
- John Reardon, Midwest Consortium
- Vern McDougall, ATL

**10:10-10:20 Overview of the WMD work of the Clearinghouse and its recent
evaluation of the TOPOFF2 Seattle exercise**

Bruce Lippy, Don Elisburg, John Moran

10:20-10:35 BREAK

10:35-11:00 Review of NIOSH/RAND Efforts

The RAND Corporation, through funding from NIOSH, has been building on their 2002 effort, “Protecting Emergency Responders” with a new report that has just been provided in draft to NIOSH for final review. In May, NIOSH-RAND provided briefings for the Department of Homeland Security and the National Response Plan Task Force that is formulating the National Incident Management System. The authors will present the key points from these briefings, which were focused on safety management within the context of incident management.

Brian A. Jackson, RAND and Herbert Linn, NIOSH, Division of Safety Research

11:00-11:15 Review of OSHA’s potential role in the changing National Response Plan

The revised National Response Plan will have far-reaching effects. The role of OSHA in the changing federal environment will be presented by one of the team most closely involved in the interagency discussions.

Gus Georgiades, OSHA Directorate of Science, Technology, and Medicine.

11:15-12:00 Demonstration of Responder Coordination at a Collapsed Building (or Dirty Bomb) Site

The Operating Engineers Hazmat Program will work with local West Virginia firefighters and medical providers to demonstrate a rescue effort after a building collapses, presumably from a terrorist attack. The scenario will demonstrate coordination and communication among the building engineers, responders, and heavy equipment operators needed to move debris.

12:00-1:00 LUNCH

AFTERNOON SESSIONS

These roundtables will involve facilitated discussions of critical issues towards the goal of consensus on possible solutions.

1:00 - 2:00 Roundtable 1: Integration of Skilled Support Personnel into the Incident Command System

Moderators: Scott Solomon, IAFF and Pete Stafford, CPWR

This roundtable will build on the efforts of NIEHS to identify Skilled Support Personnel as a population at risk and examine how to ensure they become a part of the incident command system.

2:00 – 2:45 Roundtable 2: Activation Processes for NIEHS-funded Skilled Support Personnel, First Responders, and Hazmat Teams

Moderator: John Moran and Bruce Lippy

The NIEHS awardee community has trained a large number of workers to safely handle hazardous waste. These workers as well as the instructors could be mobilized to respond to a terrorist incident. There are industrial hygienists, occupational physicians, and safety professionals funded through NIEHS awardees who could be activated, too. This roundtable will focus on the value and logistics of activating grantee resources.

2:45 – 3:00 BREAK

3:00 – 3:45 Roundtable 3: Interagency Cooperation and Public/Private Partnerships for Training and Disaster Response Preparedness

Moderator: Joseph “Chip” Hughes, NIEHS and Herbert Linn, NIOSH

There are many different programs moving forward on training diverse populations to respond to terrorist attacks. This roundtable will explore how to improve cooperation among training providers who deliver worker safety training.

3:45-4:00 CLOSING

Joseph “Chip” Hughes, Director of the NIEHS Worker Education and Training Program.